



SMOG CHECK ADVISORY

Official Publication of the California Department of Consumer Affairs/Bureau of Automotive Repair

February 2000

Governor Davis Names New BAR Chief

Governor Gray Davis announced the appointment of Douglas E. Laue as Chief, Bureau of Automotive Repair on January 18th.

Mr. Laue has been employed with the Department of Consumer Affairs in various positions since 1975. He has held the position of Deputy Executive Director for the California Medical Board since 1993. From 1991 to 1993, he served as the Assistant Chief of Information Systems for the



Department of Consumer Affairs. Prior to this, he served for 10 years as a Deputy Chief of the Bureau of Automotive Repair. He earned a Bachelor of

Arts degree from the University of California, Berkeley.

Patrick Dorais, who had been Acting Chief since last May, will be returning to his former position as BAR's Deputy Chief. Richard Mundy, who had been Acting Deputy Chief during that time, will now resume his previous BAR duties as Deputy Chief of Enforcement. ❖

BAR and ARB Officials Host Smog Check Workshop in Tijuana, Mexico

California's Smog Check Program was the focus of a two-day workshop for Mexican government officials and air quality experts on January 11 and 12 in Tijuana, Mexico, and Chula Vista. Presentations were provided by the following workshop sponsors: the California Environmental Protection Agency, Air Resources Board, and Department of Consumer Affairs/Bureau of Automotive Repair (DCA/BAR). The workshop was requested by Baja officials who plan to implement a vehicle inspection program by the end of this year.

After an overview of the Smog Check Program by then Acting BAR Chief Patrick Dorais, BAR

Workshop (continued page 3)

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Demystifying the Test-Only Process

Some Smog Check technicians and shop owners may be confused about the process used to determine which vehicles are included in the category called High Emitter Profile (HEP) and then directed to Test-Only stations for testing.

"Technicians have no control over which vehicles are selected to be sent to a Test-Only station as possible HEP vehicles," according to BAR Engineering Manager David Amlin. "We send vehicles that match our HEP criteria to Test-Only, and pretesting those vehicles cannot prevent the referral in the current or future years."

Pretesting a non-Test-Only directed vehicle may possibly help it avoid failure as a Gross Polluter and a certification test at Test-Only, but it does not mean the vehicle will avoid Test-Only referral in its next cycle.

To comply with the mandates of the federal Clean Air Act, BAR directs vehicles located in the Enhanced Areas of the state to Test-Only stations to ensure that a *minimum* of 15 percent are inspected at Test-Only stations.

Prior to selecting vehicles through the HEP for inspection at Test-Only stations, 2 percent of vehicles from the entire Enhanced Area fleet are randomly selected and sent to Test-Only stations as a check to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the Smog Check Program.

HEP referrals to Test-Only stations are made based on a set of data developed from several sources, including:

- The state Vehicle Information Database (VID), which collects the results of Smog Checks done on all vehicles. Those results are transferred by modem by the analyzers at Smog Check stations statewide.
- Smog Check inspection results collected before the VID was established.
- General vehicle data such as make, model year, vehicle miles traveled, and engine family.

Test-Only (continued page 4)



SNAPSHOT

Here are the Smog Check testing and repair statistics for the months of November and December 1999. As always, the "Tests Conducted" data represents all Acceleration Simulation Mode (ASM) and Two-Speed Idle (TSI) tests performed on vehicles by Smog Check stations statewide, with the number of certificates that resulted from these tests shown under "Certificates Issued." The remaining data represent only ASM and TSI first (initial) tests performed on vehicles. The difference between Enhanced and Basic/Change of Ownership (COO) Areas of the state is also shown.

	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
<i>Program Volume</i>		
Tests Conducted	881,561 *	869,954 *
Vehicles Tested	734,391	728,562
Enhanced	471,386	463,171
Basic/COO	262,950	265,357
Vehicles Failed	82,621 (11.3%)	78,600 (10.8%)
Enhanced	65,326 (13.9%)	61,551 (13.3%)
Basic/COO	17,295 (6.6%)	17,106 (6.5%)
Certificates Issued	747,366	735,060
<i>Type of Failure</i>		
Tailpipe	60,070 (8.2%)	56,826 (7.8%)
Enhanced	49,464 (10.5%)	46,378 (10.0%)
Basic/COO	10,597 (4.0%)	10,447 (3.9%)
Gross Polluters	27,828 (3.8%) **	25,988 (3.6%) **
Enhanced	22,985 (4.9%)	21,508 (4.6%)
Basic/COO	4,837 (1.7%)	4,480 (1.8%)
Visual	17,999 (2.5%)	16,637 (2.3%)
Enhanced	15,367 (3.3%)	14,074 (3.0%)
Basic/COO	2,632 (1.0%)	2,563 (1.0%)
Functional	42,026 (5.7%)	40,262 (5.5%)
Enhanced	33,143 (7.0%)	31,536 (6.8%)
Basic/COO	8,883 (3.5%)	8,726 (3.3%)
<i>Failure by Station Type</i>		
Test & Repair		
Enhanced	24,432 (9.8%)	22,292 (9.2%)
Basic/COO	10,182 (3.9%)	9,887 (5.7%)
GSGR		
Enhanced	11,543 (10.7%)	11,004 (10.3%)
Basic/COO	3,946 (8.0%)	4,035 (8.1%)
GPC		
Enhanced	2,213 (13.5%)	2,163 (13.3%)
Basic/COO	2,808 (7.0%)	2,773 (7.0%)
Test-Only		
Enhanced	26,749 (28.3%)	25,451 (27.2%)
Basic/COO	251 (17.8%)	245 (18.1%)
<i>By Type</i>		
High Emitter Profile (HEP)	18,400 (38.5%)	17,748 (36.2%)
Random 2%	1,819 (29.7%)	1,773 (29.2%)
Volunteers	6,540 (16.1%)	6,157 (15.6%)
<i>Average Reported Repair Costs</i>		
Vehicles Repaired	57,949	55,879
Average Cost (statewide)	\$ 123	\$ 126
Test & Repair Stations	\$ 99	\$ 101
GSGR Stations	\$ 109	\$ 111
GPC Stations	\$ 195	\$ 197
Consumer Assistance Vehicles	\$ 454 ***	\$ 437 ***
Enhanced Areas	\$ 128	\$ 130
Basic/COO Areas	\$ 114	\$ 120
<i>Consumer Assistance Program</i>		
Vehicles Receiving Repair Assistance	614	621
Vehicles Retired	53	134
Repair Cost Waivers Issued	97	105
Economic Hardship Extensions Issued	87	111

* Includes multiple tests on same vehicle.

** Subset of tailpipe failures.

*** Includes consumer co-pay.

California Ahead of Feds on SUV Emission Standards

President Clinton's announcement in December 1999 of new pollution control regulations, which for the first time applied to the popular SUVs and minivans, should have no effect in California since the state's Air Resources Board (ARB) has already enacted even tougher standards with a faster timetable.

The federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations, directed at automakers, will go into effect with the 2004 model-year vehicles. The new standards will progressively cut oxides of nitrogen (NOx) emissions from 0.4 grams per mile for cars (and somewhat higher for SUVs) to 0.07 for cars and most SUVs by the year 2007. However, California's current standard for NOx emissions is 0.2 grams per mile. Already enacted changes will reduce that limit to 0.05 for passenger vehicles beginning with the 2004 models and 0.07 for SUVs . . . three years sooner than the new federal standard. "California has always been ahead of the federal government in emission standards and it remains so," said Richard Varenchik, a spokesperson for the California ARB.

SUVs, pickup trucks, and minivans are traditionally classified as light trucks and, therefore, are subject to less stringent emission regulations. These vehicles account for nearly half of the new vehicles sold in the United States. "Working closely with industry, we will ensure both the freedom of American families to drive the vehicles of their choice and the right of American children to breathe clean, healthy air," said Clinton. Essentially, SUVs, pickup trucks, and minivans will ultimately be held to the same requirements as ordinary cars on a nationwide basis, keeping pace with California's vanguard clean air initiatives.

Concurrently, the federal EPA will direct oil refiners to reduce the amount of sulfur in gasoline by 90 percent (to an average of 30 parts per million). This will make it easier for carmakers to meet the new emission standards because of the adverse effect of sulfur on catalytic converters.

Reducing pollution today will result in ongoing benefits for decades into the future. ♦

Workshop *(continued from page 1)*

managers David Amlin, Terry Ford, George Adelsperger, and Mike Vanderlaan briefed the group on numerous aspects of the program. Among the topics covered were:

- Equipment requirements, certification, and remote sensing.
- Vehicle certification process and electronic transmission.
- Technician licensing and training.
- Key program enforcement elements.

Question and answer periods followed each of the presentations. A tour of the Chula Vista Referee Center was held on the second day of the workshop, which included a demonstration of the BAR-97 Smog Check testing equipment and a remote sensing demonstration conducted by Paul Hedglin of BAR's Engineering Division.

"The purpose of this workshop was to help our neighbors south of the border to better understand the goals and responsibilities of the California Smog Check Program," Dorais said. "The information will hopefully lead to implementation of emissions control laws and a vehicle inspection program in various cities in Baja California." ♦

HISTORICAL TEST DATA ACCESSIBLE ON EIS MACHINES

Access to historical data from tests conducted using a BAR-97 Emission Inspection System (EIS) is available for review at individual Smog Check stations, according to BAR's Engineering Branch.

"On the BAR-97, station owners and technicians have the ability to review tests conducted on vehicles at their stations," said Engineering Manager David Amlin. "There is anywhere from one test to hundreds of past tests that can be reviewed depending upon which type of system a station is using."

While BAR-97 specifications require the units to be able to store 1,000 tests, they do not require the analyzers to display the completed tests. Because manufacturers were not specifically required to provide a history of completed tests, the number of tests available for recall and display is different for each unit.

Here's how to access the historical test data on the BAR-97 EIS for each manufacturer:

SPX — An unknown number of previously completed tests can be viewed:

→ From the *Test Menu*, select item number 2, called *Reprint VIR*. It will reprint the last Vehicle Inspection Report (VIR) completed.

Worldwide — An unknown number of previously completed tests is available, but it is estimated that more than 40 can be viewed:

→ From the *Main Menu*, select item number 9, *Recall Previous Test*, highlight the VIR you wish to review, and press print.

Snap-On — It is estimated that more than 100 previously completed tests can be viewed:

→ Select from the *Main Menu*, item number 4, *Recall Previous Vehicle Tests*. Choose the test you wish to review and press print.

ESP — An unknown number of previously completed tests can be viewed:

→ From the *Main Menu*, select *Inspection Menu*, then select *Recall Vehicle Information*. You will be able to reprint the last test completed. Or, go to *Recall Vehicle Information* and enter the license number of the vehicle you wish to review.

The process to review previously completed tests on the BAR-90 TAS units is similar. Here's how to get access to the data for each manufacturer's unit:

Sun — This unit will print only the last VIR produced and the outcome of the last test:

→ From the *Main Menu*, select *Reprint Last VIR*.

ESP — About 25 previously completed vehicle test records are available on the unit:

→ From the *Main Menu*, go to *Inspection Menu* and select *Recall Vehicle Information*.

Allen — The exact number of previously completed tests available on this unit is unknown, but is believed to be more than 40:

→ From the *Main Menu*, select *Smog Check Menu* and choose item number 5, *Reprint VIR*.

Bear — This unit provides only the last VIR and the outcome of the last test conducted:

→ From the *Smog Check Menu*, select item number 3, *Reprint Last VIR*. ♦

Test-Only *(continued from page 1)*

"The data are then sorted to determine which vehicle classes (make, model, year, engine family) are most likely to fail their Smog Check inspections, especially at Gross Polluter levels," Amlin added.

"There is no single factor that identifies a vehicle that is likely to fail. A vehicle may be directed to a Test-Only station even if it has never failed a previous test, including its last one." This can happen when the vehicle belongs to a class that has a high probability of failure.

There are several steps involved in the process of selecting which vehicles in each Enhanced Area of the state are sent to Test-Only stations each month.

Using Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) data, the number of vehicles in each Enhanced Area of the state is determined. It should be noted that vehicles four model-years old and newer are included in the program count, because they are part of the Smog Check Program, even though they are currently exempt from the biennial inspection.

Each month, all vehicles in each Enhanced Area are put through a HEP model and ranked as to their likelihood of failing a Smog Check inspection. After the vehicles have been ranked by likelihood of failure, they are ranked again to establish the probability of failure, and assigned an "F Prob."

"From that list, we take 2 percent from each of the 14 counties with Enhanced Areas to use as a baseline," Amlin said. "The remaining 'F Prob' vehicles are separated by county, and those classes most likely to fail in each county are sent to Test-Only stations."

For example purposes only, if there were a total of 4-1/2 million vehicles in Los Angeles County, half of them (or 2,225,000) would be subject to Smog Check every year. In the Test-Only referral process, after the ranking procedures described above are completed, BAR would randomly select 2 percent (or 3,750 vehicles) and send them to Test-Only stations. From the remaining vehicles, another 24,375 would be directed to Test-Only each month in L.A. County.

Obviously, pretesting a vehicle will not prevent it from being sent to a Test-Only station because it would have no impact on the process BAR uses to determine which vehicles will be directed, since it focuses on vehicle classes rather than specific vehicles.

However, if a vehicle has had proper repair over the years, it will likely pass at a Test-Only station



The Census is Coming. Please Answer the Census by Mail. Every 10 years the Census Bureau is required by the U.S. Constitution to count every person in the United States. In mid-March, you will be mailed the official census questionnaire, and April 1, 2000, is Census Day. Census information is 100% confidential. The Bureau is strictly prohibited from sharing information with any other individuals or organizations, public or private. Also, California communities could lose over \$3 billion in federal tax revenue during the next decade if Californians do not respond. Please mail back your census questionnaire promptly. For more information, visit the Census Bureau's website at www.census.gov, or for information about temporary census jobs call (888) 325-7733.

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The Bottom Line as of January 1, 2000

%

Technician Data

- 108** Cut score on the current smog exam.
- 70.81** Percent of technicians passing EA Smog Check exam in December.
- 8,158** Technicians completing BAR-97 eight-hour Transition Training.
- 8,902** Advanced (EA) technicians licensed.
- 4,522** Basic (EB) technicians licensed.

Station Data

- 4,881** Test & Repair Stations statewide.
- 1,907** Gold Shield Guaranteed Repair (GSGR) stations statewide.
- 340** Gross Polluter Certification (GPC) stations statewide.
- 394** Test-Only stations statewide.
- 517** Test-Only lanes statewide.

Consumer Assistance Program Data

- 82** GPC stations providing Repair Assistance.
- 3,794** Vehicles repaired.
- 31** Dismantler sites for vehicle retirement.
- 1,254** Vehicles retired.

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even if its vehicle class falls into the HEP category. Those that have not been properly maintained may not pass at a Test-Only station.

Motorists who are required to have their vehicle's Smog Check inspection performed at a Test-Only station are notified by the DMV 95 days before their registration is due.

Included with the DMV renewal notice, which indicates that the Smog Check inspection must be done at a Test-Only station, is a Smog Check Program insert telling motorists to call the Department of Consumer Affairs' toll-free information line at (800) 952-5210 to find a conveniently located Test-Only station. Or, motorists with Internet access can go to BAR's website at www.smogcheck.ca.gov and click on the list of Test-Only stations. The motorist may then call the Test-Only station and make an appointment for a Smog Check inspection.

As the name implies, Test-Only stations are authorized to conduct Smog Check inspections but are prohibited from making *any* diagnosis or

vehicle repairs, except for pre-inspection oil changes and lubrication services.

If the vehicle fails at a Test-Only station, it must be repaired. However, the Test-Only technician cannot make referrals to another repair station. Consumers may choose a Test & Repair or Gross Polluter Certification (GPC) pilot station from a BAR-approved list that is posted at the Test-Only station. They are instructed to take the Vehicle Inspection Report (VIR) showing the results of the test conducted at the Test-Only station with them when they arrive at the Test & Repair or GPC station.

"Once the consumer arrives with the vehicle for repair, service writers and technicians should look carefully at the VIR provided by the Test-Only station," Amlin said. "The next step is to begin a complete diagnosis before attempting repairs."

Once the diagnosis and repair is complete, the vehicle must be retested at a Test-Only station for certification. ❖

Tech Tips & Causes of Disciplinary Actions Are Top Reader Survey Requests

Responses to the last Reader Survey (July 1999 issue) spoke out loud and clear for two things . . . a "tech tip" column and information concerning the causes of disciplinary actions.

New Smog Check Advisory Chat Page

In response to your request for tech tips, a new feature is being introduced in the *Smog Check Advisory* where you can ask tough questions, share technical tips, and reference handy information. Look for your inquiries and solutions on the new Smog Check Advisory Chat Page each month.

Simply submit your questions or tips to us by mail, fax, or email . . . and watch for them in print. Let's hear from you!

By Mail:

BAR Communications Team
Smog Check Advisory
Chat Page
400 R Street, Suite 3060
Sacramento, CA 95814

By Fax:

916-445-8796
Attn: Smog Check Advisory
Chat Page

By Email:

scachatpage@dca.ca.gov

Causes of Disciplinary Actions

When the Enforcement Division was asked about the nature and scope of disciplinary actions, Wayne Ramos, Program Manager I, stated, "You name it, and we've probably found it! From stations that resort to using 'low emission' vehicles in order to certify other vehicles that are not in emission compliance, to those that fabricate sophisticated tach simulations to manipulate a vehicle's RPM readings, or create counterfeit Vehicle Inspection Reports in an effort to circumvent Smog Check requirements, there is no end to the misapplied 'ingenuity' of

some technicians. And these are just a few examples of the most serious Smog Check offenses."

Ramos further advised, "The variety of violations in disciplinary cases goes far beyond the highly publicized 'clean piping' cases, however. There are also a high number of instances involving improper and incomplete inspections. A few

examples are failing to perform ignition timing checks; failing to recognize or even check for missing, modified, or disconnected emission control systems or components; and

intentionally passing vehicles when missing, modified, or disconnected systems and components are discovered. Then there are the cases where technicians have purposely induced vacuum leaks and misadjusted fuel mixture controls and ignition timing in order to 'tweak' the vehicles into passing. There are also those unlicensed technicians who perform smog inspections and issue certificates without a valid license. As you might imagine, the combinations of these violations are practically limitless."

When a technician or station gets "busted," there is no hard and fast unwavering penalty for any specific violation or combination of violations. The facts and circumstances of each case (mitigation, aggravation, disciplinary history, as well as the magnitude and severity of the violations) are considered in the imposition of penalties. There is a wide range of penalties that may be imposed in disciplinary cases . . . from issuance of a citation, to public reproof, probation, suspension, outright revocation of licensure, and any combination in between. Generally, acts of "clean piping" will almost certainly result in revocation of the station's and technician's licenses. Performing improper or incomplete inspections will generally draw penalties ranging from issuance of a citation to

probation with a period of suspension. And, in extreme cases, these acts will result in outright revocation of licenses. In addition to the disciplinary penalties imposed on licenses, monetary fines, reimbursement of investigative costs, and restitution to victims may also be imposed. Monetary penalties have ranged from as little as \$250 to more than \$100,000.

Since the decisions rendered in disciplinary actions are often based on a multitude of charges and allegations, to itemize each infraction for every disciplined licensee in the *Smog Check Advisory* would be impractical.



However, more detailed disciplinary action information will become available in the near future on the BAR website. That portion of the website is currently "under construction." An announcement will be made when it is activated.

To guide Administrative Law Judges in proposing penalties, and to inform licentiates of the potential impact on their licenses of improper or illegal behavior, the Bureau has adopted and published its *Guidelines for Disciplinary Penalties and Terms and Conditions of Probation* (revised May 1997). Copies may be obtained from any BAR field office or through the DCA/BAR website: www.smogcheck.ca.gov. ♦

Correction

A story in the January edition of the *Smog Check Advisory* erroneously said that the BAR-97 analyzer contains specific codes for the technician to use when a test must be aborted. The story should have said that the BAR-90, not the BAR-97 analyzer, contains codes to use when a test is aborted.

Disciplinary Actions

Northern California

AUTOTECH MOTOR SERVICE—San Mateo
Sami R. Haddad, Owner

Order: ARD registration revoked, stayed, and placed on three years' probation. Smog Check Station license revoked. Further ordered to report to BAR as directed and reimburse BAR \$4,000 for costs of investigation and prosecution. (10/07/99)

HIDEKI JOE WATANABE—Hayward

Order: Basic Area Smog Check Technician license revoked. (10/07/99)

JOHN ZAREFAKIS—Lodi

Order: Advanced Emission Specialist Technician license revoked. (10/22/99)

WAYNE'S SMOG INSPECTION—Oakley

Willard A. Wayne, Owner

Order: ARD registration permanently invalidated, stayed, and placed on three years' probation. Smog Check Station license revoked, stayed, placed on three years' probation, and suspended for 30 days. Further ordered to report to BAR as directed and reimburse BAR \$3,500 for costs and expenses of investigation. (10/26/99)

JEFFREY JOHN WAYNE—Oakley

Order: Advanced Emission Specialist Technician license revoked, stayed, placed on three years' probation, and suspended for 30 days. (10/26/99)

ANTHONY RICHARD BERTOLINI—Sebastopol

Order: Basic Area Smog Check Technician license revoked. (10/27/99)

Southern California

TURBO PERFORMANCE—Van Nuys

Robert Anthony Serra, Owner/Technician

Order: ARD registration permanently invalidated. Smog Check Station license and Advanced Emission Specialist Technician license revoked. Further ordered to reimburse BAR \$13,000 for costs of investigation and prosecution. (10/07/99)

CITY AUTO REPAIR—San Diego

Joseph Michael Meram, Owner/Technician

Order: ARD registration revoked, stayed, and placed on two years' probation. Smog Check Station license revoked, stayed, placed on two years' probation, and suspended for 30 days. Advanced Emission Specialist Technician license revoked, stayed, and placed on two years' probation with 30 days' suspension. Further ordered to report to BAR as directed, successfully complete a BAR-approved training course in diagnosis and repair of emission systems failures and engine performance and automotive-related studies, and reimburse BAR \$7,150. (10/07/99)

KING SMOG—Hawthorne

Bau Van Nguyen, Owner

Order: ARD registration and Smog Check Station license revoked. (10/07/99)

THUAN DUC VO—Gardena

Order: Advanced Emission Specialist Technician license revoked, stayed, placed on three years' probation, and suspended for one year plus additional time if necessary to take and pass licensure examination for Advanced Emission Specialist Technician license. Also ordered to take

and pass with a grade of C or better six semester units of junior college level vocational training in the area of diagnosis and repair of improperly functioning motor vehicle emission control systems. Further ordered to report to BAR as directed. (10/07/99)

BAJA SMOG—Los Angeles

George Sanchez Guerrero, Owner/Technician—Monterey Park

Order: ARD registration and Smog Check Station license revoked. Advanced Emission Specialist Technician license revoked, stayed, placed on five years' probation, and suspended for 60 days. Further ordered to report to BAR as directed and reimburse BAR \$5,000 for legal and investigative costs. (10/08/99)

VALLEYS UNION, INC.—North Hollywood

Norallah F. Amirian, President

Order: Smog Check Station license revoked, stayed, placed on two years' probation, and suspended for 45 days. (10/13/99)

SULTAN'S AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE CENTER—San Luis Obispo

Sultan Yeaqub Ahmed, Owner/Technician

Order: ARD registration, Smog Check Station license, and Advanced Emission Specialist Technician license revoked. (10/14/99)

ROBERTO GARCIA CARDENAS—Fontana

Order: Advanced Emission Specialist Technician license revoked, and any other license issued in the name of Roberto Garcia Cardenas revoked or suspended. (10/14/99) ♦

Voided Warranty on Improper Cat Replacement?

The Bureau of Automotive Repair's newly released *Smog Check Inspection Manual* states that a vehicle must be in fuel control before replacing a catalytic converter (see page 100, #2). "Installing a replacement catalytic converter to get the vehicle to pass the test on a vehicle that has failed the tailpipe portion of the inspection, without first repairing the actual cause of the failure, may void the warranty on the converter," advises Wayne Brumett of BAR's Standards and Training Branch.

For example, the website (www.car-sound.com) of Car Sound, an aftermarket catalytic converter manufacturer, states, "Your catalytic converter should have never failed. If it did, then you have

a problem." The manufacturer lists several reasons for catalytic converter failure; chief among them is an out-of-tune engine. Further, the manufacturer advises, "Any time an engine is operating outside proper specifications, unnecessary wear and damage may be caused to the catalytic converter as well as to the engine



Catalytic Converter

itself. The damage is often the result of an incorrect air/fuel mixture, incorrect timing, or misfiring spark plugs." Car Sound warns: "... the warranty that comes with a new replacement catalytic converter does not cover the type of damage listed above."

BAR does not consider it an accepted trade practice to replace a catalytic converter on a vehicle that fails a tailpipe inspection, unless the cause of the emission failure is properly diagnosed and repaired. Without proper repairs, the fix would be temporary and deprive not only the vehicle owner of the benefits of improved performance, but all of us of cleaner, healthier air. ♦ (See related article on page 7.)

CAP Pays Off With More Effective Repairs

The Bureau of Automotive Repair's new Consumer Assistance Program (CAP), formerly known as the Low-Income Repair Assistance Program, or LIRAP, is having a positive effect on the quality of repairs being made by participating shops, according to reviews of repair invoices and work orders.

Although the number of cars repaired under CAP since it was implemented statewide on March 31, 1999, is small so far—slightly more than 3,200 as of November—the types of repairs being done are ones that will have a long-term benefit for consumers whose cars received state repair assistance, and for all Californians with improved air quality.

"Technicians at shops participating in CAP are conducting a full diagnosis to make the repairs that are in the best interest of the consumer and the program," said BAR's Deputy Chief Patrick Dorais. "They are doing what they have been taught."

Data are beginning to show that CAP technicians are identifying and making a significant number of upstream repairs—those in front of

the catalytic converter (CAT)—before they rush to CAT replacement as the fix. Numerous studies have shown that premature replacement of the CAT is often a costly short-term fix for the consumer, the car, and air quality. *(See related article on page 6.)*

Upstream repairs include items such as the ignition system, fuel system, and emissions control systems, which also include the fuel evap, exhaust gas recirculation (EGR), and air injection systems.

Examination of the repair data on participating CAP vehicles clearly shows a drop in the number of CAT replacements to about 20 percent from more than 38 percent, according to Dorais.

Other statistics show that the total average repair cost in CAP through November 1999 was \$461.17. Of that amount, consumers spent an average of \$108.62, while the state spent \$352.55. In addition, nearly 59 percent of the vehicles repaired were Gross Polluters. The result is an overall estimated emissions reduction of 338.61 tons.

Under CAP, consumers with an income level of 175 percent of the federal poverty level (about

\$29,000 for a family of four) are eligible for repair assistance. Consumers are required to make a co-payment of \$75 toward the vehicle's repair, and the work must be done at a Gold Shield Gross Polluter Certification station that has elected to participate in the CAP program.

Originally implemented on November 5, 1998, in Sacramento as the Low-Income Repair Assistance Program, CAP was expanded statewide on March 31, 1999. Initially, consumers were required to make a co-payment of \$250 toward repairs, but that was reduced to the current \$75 co-payment on May 3, 1999.

"Our findings are showing that consumers do want to make the kinds of repairs that produce long-term benefits for them and the air," Dorais said.

"As we progress, consumers on average are voluntarily spending more than the required \$75 to make the full and complete repairs needed in cases where the state's maximum payment of \$450 has been reached." ♦



SMOG CHECK STATION CITATIONS

FACILITY NAME	ADDRESS	CITY	ZIP	LEVEL	ARD NUMBER	CITATION NUMBER	ASSESS AMOUNT	ASSESS DATE	DATE MAILED
15 Minute Smog Check	6590 Miramar Road	San Diego	92121	1	AM 192432	C-99-485	250	12/01/99	05/21/99
Toyota of Huntington Beach	18881 Beach Blvd.	Huntington Beach	92648	1	AM 186811	C-00-177	250	12/06/99	10/20/99
Smog Pros	2245 South Main Street	Santa Ana	92707	1	AC 138621	C-00-181	250	12/02/99	10/20/99
Dick Watson Auto Center	2345 South El Camino Real	San Clemente	92672	1	AK 073050	C-00-190	250	12/06/99	10/20/99
Smog 4 Less	2240 North Blackstone Avenue	Fresno	93703	1	AK 202254	C-00-194	250	12/06/99	10/20/99
Mac Testing Centers #11	4200 Firestone Blvd.	South Gate	90280	2	AG 195617	C-00-199	750	12/09/99	10/20/99
Arceo's Smog Automotive	568 Pacific Avenue	Oxnard	93030	3	AE 153929	C-00-205	1500	12/06/99	10/20/99
A-1 Super Tire & Auto Service	10611 Valley Mall	El Monte	91731	1	AC 203901	C-00-209	250	12/02/99	10/22/99
Sky Smog	20635 Hawthorne Blvd.	Torrance	90503	1	AJ 201573	C-00-217	250	12/07/99	11/08/99
Smog Pros	1410 East Main Street	El Cajon	92021	1	AC 138535	C-00-218	250	12/20/99	11/08/99
Shadetree Automotive	1635 North El Camino Real	San Clemente	92672	1	AD 132005	C-00-222	250	12/16/99	11/08/99
Peter Auto Service	11601 Anabel Avenue #B	Garden Grove	92843	2	AC 203732	C-00-224	750	12/02/99	11/09/99
Lincoln Smog Checks	1611 West Lincoln Avenue	Anaheim	92801	2	AK 201907	C-00-225	750	12/09/99	11/08/99
Normandie Auto Service	2217 South Normandie Avenue	Los Angeles	90007	1	AH 148646	C-00-227	250	12/06/99	11/08/99
Jackson & Wend Automotive	1230 11th Street	Modesto	95354	1	AC 146000	C-00-234	250	12/08/99	11/22/99
Alosta Shell	1860 East Alosta Avenue	Glendora	91740	2	AL 175356	C-00-236	750	12/17/99	11/30/99

* Stations that have had their Gold Shield Guaranteed Repair (GSGR) certification withdrawn (none reported).

** Stations that have had their Gross Polluter Certification (GPC) Pilot authority withdrawn (none reported).

*** Stations that have had their GPC and Repair Assistance authority withdrawn (none reported).



Smog Check Advisory

State of California
Gray Davis, Governor

California Department
of Consumer Affairs
Kathleen Hamilton, Director

Bureau of Automotive Repair
Douglas E. Laue, Chief
10240 Systems Parkway
Sacramento, CA 95827

BAR FIELD OFFICE PHONE NUMBERS

Bakersfield (661) 833-6304
Canoga Park (818) 596-4400
Culver City (310) 410-0024
Fresno (559) 445-5015
Fullerton (714) 680-7851
Oceanside (760) 439-0942
Richmond (510) 243-9410
Riverside (909) 782-4250
Sacramento (916) 255-4200
San Jose (408) 277-1860
South El Monte (626) 575-6934

DCA Cashiering (916) 322-7002
DCA Licensing (916) 322-4000
ET Help Desk (916) 255-4476
MCI (800) 731-SMOG
(Then press 5 for technical support)

Consumer Assistance and
Referee Center ... (800) 622-7733

DCA HOTLINE (800) 952-5210

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Smog Check Advisory

February 2000

Little Scoops...

- ❖ Some minor adjustments to the new *Smog Check Inspection Manual* are in the works. They will be included in an upcoming edition of the *Smog Check Advisory* with instructions on how shops can insert them directly into the binders holding the new manuals.
- ❖ Current law exempts vehicles four model-years old and newer from biennial (every other year) smog inspections. Starting with DMV vehicle registrations due January 1, 2000, and later, all 1997, 1998, 1999, and 2000 model-year vehicles are exempted from biennial smog inspections. However, these newer vehicles are required to have a smog inspection upon change of ownership and initial registration as a used vehicle in California. The exemption is based on the model-year of the vehicle, not the date of purchase.
- ❖ Did you know? . . . to view past and present issues of the *Smog Check Advisory*, visit our website at www.smogcheck.ca.gov. Just scroll to the bottom of the home page, click on "Download BAR Forms, Newsletters and Fact Sheets," and then select "*Smog Check Advisory* newsletters." You'll find two and a half years' worth of our monthly smog publication, as well as many other useful publications.
- ❖ Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) technician certifications now have different expiration dates, depending on when an exam was passed. Certifications for exams passed in May will continue to expire in the month of July, five years later. However, ASE certifications issued as a result of passing November exams will now have January expiration dates. For example, certifications issued from May 1999 exams will expire in July 2004, and certifications issued as a result of exams passed in November 1999 would be valid to January 2005.
- ❖ Additional locations where new computerized technician examinations can be held are being explored. The new test sites are expected to be open six days a week, Monday through Saturday.
- ❖ The Quality Assurance Program is continuing to evaluate shops based on four major criteria—a low vehicle failure rate, the number of aborted tests, reported repair costs, and technician competency, according to BAR's Smog Check Enforcement Manager Mike Vanderlaan.

Visit DCA/BAR's website: www.smogcheck.ca.gov